

Interview Transcript

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Interviewee: Sister Barbara Sullivan

Interviewer: Shannon Green, Director, CSJ Institute, Mount Saint Mary's University; Sean Gary, Kelby Thwaits, Instructor, Film and Television, Mount Saint Mary's University.

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Transcribed By: Nancy Steinmann

[00:00:00.00] [Director's comments]

[00:00:21.16] SHANNON GREEN: This is Monday, October 23 [2017], at Carondelet Center, Mount Saint Mary's University CSJ Oral History Project, Shannon Green interviewing Sister Barbara Sullivan.

[00:00:35.06] SHANNON GREEN: So, Sister Barbara, if you could start us off--would you just state your full name and your age?

[00:00:42.13] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: My name is Sister Barbara Sullivan. And--well, my middle name is Mary, but I never use it. And I'm eighty-one years old.

[00:00:51.24] SHANNON GREEN: Sister Barbara, would you tell us a little bit about where you grew up and your family?

[00:00:56.29] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: I grew up in Salt Lake City, Utah, and I was a Catholic. And my father came there because his father worked on the railroad, and my mother came there from Idaho to go to nursing school. And I have two younger brothers, both of whom are deceased, and a younger sister who also went to the Mount, only because I went--she didn't get a choice. And she taught at the Mount and worked at the Mount for a number of years. So there were not a lot of Catholics in Utah. And when I grew up I knew all of them. And--so I had some experience of being a minority, because I was a minority. And when I was in high school I didn't want people to ask me where I went to school, because I went to a Catholic school, which would immediately identify me, and, you know, most of the cool kids were Mormons.

[00:01:56.07] SHANNON GREEN: Was your family--it sounds like your family was somewhat religious--Catholic--you know, go to Mass regularly, active in the parish?

[00:02:05.04] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Yes. My mother was a convert, and her mother who was a very strict Methodist said to her, "It's important that in a family you go to church together, and Catholics will never change, so you should become a Catholic". So my mother did at some point. But my grandmother also taught me something wonderful about God, because when we went to Idaho, the Catholic priest only came every other week. And my grandmother said to me, "Now, Catholics don't believe this--you only go to Catholic church--but I think God doesn't care--so if you want to come to church with me the other Sunday you can--but don't ever tell your family"--nor the Sisters I knew. I quite liked the Methodist church. But we went. I thought--I've often remembered that. She was a very wise person and that helped me to broaden my idea about God.

[00:02:57.07] SHANNON GREEN: Sounds like a very ecumenical kind of upbringing.

[00:02:59.18] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Yes.

[00:03:01.24] SHANNON GREEN: So did you know any Catholic Sisters when you were growing up?

[00:03:06.01] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Yes. I went--I had Holy Cross Sisters. They were the only ones in--well there was only one Catholic school in Salt Lake, and so I had them growing up, yes.

[00:03:17.17] SHANNON GREEN: Did you ever consider joining--becoming a religious when you were growing up in Salt Lake?

[00:03:23.08] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: No, but I was going to go to their college. And it was sort of amazing, because--but my father was--he could not go to college because his family couldn't afford it, so his children were going to go to college, because he said, "I worked my way up--but you can't do that anymore--you have to go to college." And although I would say he was a man of his age--and would be a sexist--he never--his daughters could go to college if they wanted to. Only three girls out of my high school class went to college. But I always knew I could go to college. I--that was one of, I think, his gifts.

[00:04:07.01] SHANNON GREEN: What did you think you wanted to do then, when you were in high school, thinking about going to college?

[00:04:11.00] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: You know, I--have to say I never really thought about it a whole lot. [laughs]. You know, maybe be a teacher, maybe do something with writing. I loved English.

[00:04:24.23] SHANNON GREEN: So you met the Sisters of St. Joseph at Mount Saint Mary's, right?

[00:04:29.28] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Right. I never saw a Sister--a Carondelet Sister--I'd never even heard of a Carondelet Sister until I came to college. And how I came here was, I had rheumatic fever four times, and the last time I was a senior in high school. And the doctor told me I could go to college, but it had to be in California or Arizona--I couldn't go someplace where it would be cold. So the only college I knew about was Dominican San Rafael [Dominican University of California in San Rafael, California]. And I knew a girl that went there and she was rich and we weren't rich, so I shouldn't go there. I can hardly believe how dumb I was in terms of all this. So somehow I knew that there was a Marymount College in Los Angeles. So I thought maybe I'd go there. And a girl I went to high school with had a brother at Loyola [University]. And I guess she wrote and told him this and he wrote back and said, "Oh no, tell her to go to Mount Saint Mary's--she'll like that better than Marymount". Well, if a boy from Loyola thought that the Mount was better, I mean, what more--[laughs]. And then somebody had a year book, so I saw the yearbook. So I wrote, got the information, we could afford it, and I signed up--having no idea that it was on a mountain. [laughs].

[00:05:44.29] SHANNON GREEN: Do you remember coming to the Mount for the first time?

[00:05:49.11] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Yes. I--in those days there were no freeways. I came on the train to the station down in Los--in LA. And I knew a boy, not real well, from SC [University of Southern California]. And so he picked me up and we drove and we drove and we drove. And I was getting really nervous that he was kidnapping me, because in Utah we'd be in another city if not close to another state! But then we started up this hill, and I'm thinking, "Oh, my Lord!" And then we went by what was called the House of Studies--now Carondelet Center--and there were these weird girls in these weird outfits. And I could hardly wait to get to a phone to call my mother and tell her I was coming home. And he said, "I don't think this is right--I think we need to keep on going". So we came up the rest of the hill and they didn't look like that. I'd never seen a postulant in my life, so--I calmed down a little bit. [laughs].

[00:06:52.15] SHANNON GREEN: So do you remember--what did you study at the Mount?

[00:06:58.21] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: I was an English major and a history minor. And I loved English and Sister Mary Patricia [Sexton (1912-1986)] and Sister Laurentia [Digges (1910-1991)] were top notch teachers, so--.

[00:07:07.13] SHANNON GREEN: I was going to ask you if you remember some of your teachers--faculty.

[00:07:11.15] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Yes. And Sister St. Francis [Sheerin] taught History like, you know, she'd lived through it, regardless of what age it was. [laughs]. So it was always very interesting, yes.

[00:07:21.00] SHANNON GREEN: So at what point did you consider entering? When did you start to experience a call?

[00:07:27.06] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Well, at the end of my freshman year thirteen girls entered the convent, and I thought, "Wow!" That was a real surprise to me, because I'd never known anybody that had-

-. So I thought about it a little bit, and then at the end of the sophomore--the end of my sophomore year, Sister Laurentia was trying to--she thought this would be a good idea. But I wasn't ready yet, so I waited until I graduated.

[00:07:56.26] SHANNON GREEN: So you did have Sisters who encouraged you?

[00:08:00.09] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Yes.

[00:08:02.05] SHANNON GREEN: Sister Laurentia--

[00:08:03.07] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: --and Sister Mary Patricia especially.

[00:08:05.25] SHANNON GREEN: What would they say to a young woman that they wanted to consider entering? How would they approach it?

[00:08:11.15] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: I think they just asked me if I had ever thought about it. And they--I guess they encouraged me to think about it. They said that it was a good life.

[00:08:25.12] SHANNON GREEN: Would you have considered yourself, you know, having an active prayer life and spiritual life at that time?

[00:08:33.06] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: For a person in college yes. From this perspective now, no. [laughs]. But yes. I used to go to Mass sometimes in the morning, and--.

[00:08:45.21] SHANNON GREEN: So can you share what attracted you, or what you--when you interacted with the Sisters of St. Joseph, what appealed to you?

[00:08:54.10] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: The memory that comes--that I've shared before a lot is, when I was a freshman, the Sisters gave a Christmas dinner for us before we went home. I obviously boarded. And the freshmen served it. So we went out to the kitchen and they--to get the food. And Mother Rosemary [Lyons (1893-1971)], who was the President of the college, and had been a--what they called a "big shot"--we didn't--nuns would never say that--in the order was out there. She had her sleeves off, her things rolled up and she was dishing mashed potatoes like all her life she'd known how to dish up mashed potatoes. And that really struck me, because the--my experience with Sisters always growing up--whether it's true or not, but it was my experience--was they'd never do something like that. The President of the college would certainly not be serving mashed potatoes. That was--that would be beneath her. And it wasn't. And they were all out there doing whatever. That really impressed me.

[00:10:03.22] SHANNON GREEN: So you decided to enter after graduation?

[00:10:06.23] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Yes.

[00:10:07.12] SHANNON GREEN: How did your family feel about that?

[00:10:09.18] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Well, my father thought that that was--if that's what God wanted me to do that was fine. My mother--my mother asked me, "Did I give you the impression that being married wasn't a good thing?" She was concerned about that. And her biggest concern was what did the habit look like. Because see, they'd never seen anyone in the habits, but she knew there were habits like this [gestures wide around head], with the--Sisters that had--she did not want to know that. My father had come up to the Mount once to see it. And my mother asked him what they looked like. And he said, "They wear black and white, and they're small--short." She said, "But Barbara's not short!" [laughs]. So--but my mother was--if that was what I wanted to do, that was--. My father also told me I could come home. My father had great insight into me, which I didn't realize at the time. He said, "You know, you don't like people telling you what to do." [laughs]. So he wasn't so sure that I would--but he was right about my not liking people to tell me what to do. [laughs].

[00:11:20.26] SHANNON GREEN: Did that come up while you were a postulant or novice?

[00:11:24.07] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Oh yes. Yes.

[00:11:25.11] SHANNON GREEN: Tell us a little bit about your early days as a postulant and novice, and--was it difficult at times, or was it an adjustment?

[00:11:35.08] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Oh, it's huge adjustment, you know. We got up at five o'clock, we went to prayers, then we had breakfast, we kept silence, we did our charges [chores]. Now I--I was--but there were five of us in my reception who'd been to college. See, then they went to school. Well, we'd already been to school, so--I spent a lot of time in the kitchen. And then sometimes they'd arrange for us to have a class. But we did that. I was here when the fire [Bel Air, 1961] happened, and my sister was a student up here at the Mount. And she came down to get me, because they--she was concerned. It is--and we went to the chapel to pray. And we prayed for a whole half hour. And then we went into lunch. And the Provincial had the blinds closed so people couldn't see the fire out there, but I was serving at that time, so we could see the fire. You know, it was right there. And--but we had to go eat before we could leave-- [laughs]. And so, one of the things they did was, they had--we used to get little boxes that had ice cream in them and they served that so they didn't have to dish up the thing, because we needed to get out of there. And the Sister who was sitting there, the first one, she's trying to decide which kinds of ice cream she wants. And Mary Ellen says to her [yelling], "Just take one! We need to go!" [laughs]. It is a miracle that we all got out of here. And I was very fortunate, because I hate to sew and can't sew--I was living with the postulants and that part of the building didn't burn. So I at least had a habit when I came back. Most people just had what they had on their backs. But the Sisters were very good about providing us with--well toothpaste was the big thing originally! [laughs]. But nightgowns and things like that, because literally, half of my reception had nothing.

[00:13:46.25] SHANNON GREEN: Did you have to move around different places for a little while?

[00:13:51.06] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: The first night we went to Daniel Freeman--the group I was in went to Daniel Freeman. And they were thrilled because they have this--they had this emergency plan of what to do if there was a crisis in Los Angeles, and they got to practice it. But then we went to St. Mary's Academy, the one on Slauson and Crenshaw, and I don't remember how many weeks we stayed, and then we got to come back. But the postulants had to stay at Doheny [campus] for months, because there wasn't room for them all.

[00:14:18.15] SHANNON GREEN: So you were--oh okay--so--did you have to sew your own habit?

[00:14:25.21] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Yes. But they realized that this was not going to be--my forte at all. And so I got one habit that was pretty much done and various people in my reception who liked so sew helped.

[00:14:39.07] SHANNON GREEN: Do you remember your reception and what that day was like for you? Receiving the habit, wearing the white dress--I assume you did that?

[00:14:49.29] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: I did. I--[laughs]--yeah, I don't have a lot of memories. Oh, except that when we were finished my brothers came out and, you know, were mimicking various things that were happening--I do remember that. [laughs].

[00:15:07.02] SHANNON GREEN: Brothers. [laughs].

[00:15:08.07] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Yes, brothers. [all laugh].

[00:15:09.21] SHANNON GREEN: Did you receive a religious name?

[00:15:11.18] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Yes. Sister Kenneth Ann.

[00:15:14.03] SHANNON GREEN: Sister Kenneth Ann--was that one of the name you had--

[00:15:14.21] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Yes. My father's name was Kenneth. My mother's name was Blanche. And I--and then Ann was my sister's name. So--by the time I got there--we couldn't repeat names, so--all the good names were gone by the time I entered. [all laugh].

[00:15:33.11] SHANNON GREEN: I haven't heard a Sister Kenneth before, so--[laughs].

[00:15:35.18] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: No. Not one of the--[laughs].

[00:15:39.18] SHANNON GREEN: Thinking back to those days, can you reflect on how the charism might have been described then, or what your experience of the charism would have been? And just try to get a little bit of pre-Vatican [II]/post-Vatican II reflection on that.

[00:15:57.00] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Well, I never--we'd never heard the word "charism". We didn't talk about that. And they did talk about "unity and reconciliation", and "service"--but that wasn't--that hadn't been discovered yet. So, no, we didn't get a lot about that before--when I was in the novitiate.

[00:16:21.11] SHANNON GREEN: What about the history of the congregation and the Sisters of St. Joseph? Was there any part of that that you learned about then that was inspiring to you?

[00:16:32.29] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Not particularly, because we didn't know a whole lot until the--after Vatican II when they went to France and studied. So I knew who the priest was that--well, we thought it was the priest that founded the order. We didn't realize it was really six Sisters. And we didn't know a lot about that. A lot of that was not--I didn't know until after Vatican Council. Although I certainly knew that we were Sisters that served and--

[00:17:07.04] SHANNON GREEN: Yeah.

[00:17:08.22] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Yes, but--.

[00:17:10.00] SHANNON GREEN: So you went into teaching then as your first ministry?

[00:17:12.23] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Yes.

[00:17:13.08] SHANNON GREEN: Could you share a little bit about your early days as a teacher?

[00:17:16.13] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Right. And I taught high school. Once--I guess when I was in the novitiate--we'd been talking [unintelligible]--I said something about being first grade. And the postulant mistress--when she was talking to me--said, "I don't think you're going to teach first grade--I think you're probably going--I don't think you're going to teach grammar school." Thank God they knew that I would have been a total disaster. Once, before I made final vows, I got sent to try to determine which of these pre-school people were supposed to come--I was a total failure. I asked them to please--would the last person in the row please stand up and collect the papers. I learned that they don't know they're in rows, and they don't know they're the last person--[laughs]. And so I got sent to--I went to St. Mary's--I lost the question--.

[00:18:09.00] SHANNON GREEN: Just your early--your first teaching experience.

[00:18:12.24] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: I got sent--I lived here for two years because I was in the juniorate and we drove back and forth every day and went to St. Mary's Academy. And there were maybe forty Sisters there, and it was just the beginning of the civil rights movement [1960s], and the school was beginning to be integrated. But it was a wonderful [system?]-those forty people were really dedicated to that school and those girls. And besides teaching whatever it was we taught, and making sure they had a good education, to provide other opportunities for them to be aware of what was happening in the world and what could be done. And even to support them in their sports and--. It was--this is our school, and you're not just a teacher. We do what we need to do for these girls.

[00:19:05.14] SHANNON GREEN: Sounds like there's a sense of pride about being in one of your own--

[00:19:07.02] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Yes. And of course it was--for years this was the school. I didn't have any experience of that. But I did know when I entered who were the red--that I would have been a "red tie" and these were "red ties". So I knew all of those things. [all laugh].

[00:19:24.11] SHANNON GREEN: What did you--what was it like for you to be in the classroom? Did you enjoy being a high school teacher?

[00:19:31.20] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Yes. I liked it very much--teaching, yes. And I then--I also taught at St. Bernard's [Playa del Rey, California] and Bishop Montgomery [High School, Torrance, California] here. And both of those were both boys and girls schools. And, no, I liked it very much.

[00:19:46.07] SHANNON GREEN: You've said a little bit about this, but it sounds like--you know, this is the time, the sixties and the seventies, things are changing, Vatican II is coming on and being implemented. Can you give us a sense of just the context that you were teaching in, a little bit more about that--whether it's--Los Angeles integration you've already mentioned--

[00:20:08.02] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Well, I was very fortunate in--the community asked me--I never even thought about this--the community asked me if I would go to USF [University of San Francisco] and get a masters in Theology, right after Vatican II. So at that time--I'm not answering the question exactly, right?

[00:20:25.19] SHANNON GREEN: That's okay.

[00:20:26.14] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: I went to USF and the priest who was the head of the Theology department--his family had left him lots of money, and he hired all of the best theologians from the world to come and teach at USF. And in the summer there were maybe five or six hundred priests and Sisters from all over the country and the world who came to study Theology. And it was--it was wonderful. Because at lunch and that you heard about a lot of things going on in a lot of different places. But also, what people were struggling with and thinking about. And for me it was just very mind opening, and made a lot of sense, you know. It wasn't a struggle for me. I had always thought some of those things we believed didn't make a lot of sense. So it made a lot of sense to me. But I remember the first day, I'm in my very first class, and there are about a hundred and some odd people. And Barnabas Ahern [Rev. Barnabas Mary Ahern, CP (1916-1995), American Catholic theologian and Biblical scholar], who was one of the top theologians at that time says, "Now as you know, Matthew didn't write Matthew." I thought--up until that point I thought I was going to be okay in graduate school. I thought, "Oh! No I didn't know that." [laughs]. And there were a whole lot of other things I didn't know. And there was a lot of struggle going on in the church at that time, and so there were a number of people there who were sharing their experiences about that. It was a very hard time for many Catholics, and it was a very hard time in the community. And so it was a hard time for me because I felt badly that we didn't all--we weren't all in the same place. But personally, it was just a very freeing experience and made a whole lot of sense. And I realize I was really very fortunate to have all of those really good theologians and to meet all those people from all over.

[00:22:44.21] SHANNON GREEN: That does sound like the idea way to experience all that was coming in.

[00:22:48.00] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Right.

[00:22:49.28] SHANNON GREEN: Were there any other theologians, or concepts, or any other parts of Vatican II that really--that you really grabbed onto, or that inspired you?

[00:23:01.09] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Well, the concept, I think, of "the people of God"--that's where the Church was--is--and should be. And a lot about scripture. To both be more knowledgeable about how it came to be, but also how you could use scripture for your personal prayer. And that it was also meant to be--that we didn't have to get all of our information about God or understanding from God from other people. But that we could also pray and reflect and come to know some things about God.

[00:23:48.26] SHANNON GREEN: How did it impact your own spiritual life? Sounds like scripture is one way, but [unintelligible].

[00:23:54.01] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Yes, the other--what happened, and I don't exactly know how--I think because I do have a sense of ritual in me--when--after I'd go in the summer and that and other times, Sisters would ask me to share, because everyone was really interested in this. And instead of teaching or saying--what I tended to do was to create prayer rituals, and then invite people to share. It was very important to me that everybody get a chance to share about what this meant to them. And so, it was out of that that then people began to ask me to do retreats. And I was one of the very first Sisters in our community--there were a group of us--that began to do retreats for other Sisters. Up until that time it was always priests. And it came out of my experience of--from my Theology at USF. And when the community asked me about getting a PhD--which would mean that I would teach at the Mount the rest of my life--I realized, you know, that how I wanted to use my knowledge and that was much more in working with groups of people.

[00:25:23.20] SHANNON GREEN: So does that kind of lead into your transition from high school teaching to parish work?

[00:25:28.16] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Yes.

[00:25:29.21] SHANNON GREEN: So what's going on in that--

[00:25:31.03] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: It took a few years. I went to--in the meantime I've gone to Tucson [Arizona]. But yes it did. It--that, and the fact that I kept getting colds and the doctor kept saying to me, "You need to stop being around young people--they are giving you colds." But so then I did go to work in the parish.

[00:25:49.05] SHANNON GREEN: What was it like to move from--having been in LA for a few years now and then it's--going to Tucson. Was that something that you wanted, or looked forward to?

[00:25:58.26] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Yes. [Sister] Clare Dunn (-1981) and [Sister] Rachel Fitzgerald had--were really good friends of mine and we had taught together at St. Mary's [Academy] and they were now in Tucson. And so there was an opening for a teacher at Salpointe [High School]. So they said to me, why didn't I come? And at that point you could request if you wanted to. So I did. And actually, I really liked it, because I grew up in Salt Lake City, which was a smaller town than Los Angeles. So Tucson's more the size of Salt Lake City. So I liked that. They were--the Sisters there were involved with the farm workers meeting--movement, but also the Ecumenical Council, so I got to know lots of people in the community really soon. Moving into parish work--well one thing, you didn't have to be there at eight o'clock. [laughs]. You had--your schedule was different. I liked working with adults. I liked sharing the new things. I liked trying to create liturgies that would be more meaningful for people. I liked doing scriptures, things. But again there was a lot of tension too, between people who liked the way the old was and didn't want the new. So--.

[00:27:22.14] SHANNON GREEN: So when you moved to Tucson are you wearing the habit at this time, or had you already--

[00:27:27.03] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: No. No. Do you want to know--my changing the habit? Okay. I think it's 1968--the chapter said we could change the habit. I wanted to. It was nice but if you had your hands full of books and a long dress--to get up the stairs was--. And people stared at you. And when you went to Utah people really stared at you, because they never saw anybody looking like this. So--I don't care to be stared at. So I really wanted to change. And at the beginning all five of us were going to change. And I said--I thought this was brilliant--"Why don't we change in January"--which would be really fast--"during the semester test?" Because we only have two classes each day--they walk in, you give them the test, they have to do the test--you know, they're not looking at you--it would be perfect. Well, the--not everybody wanted to do it originally, and then to find clothes. Because these are the days of the miniskirts, and we had to wear--they had to be below your knees and elbows here [points at elbows]. So that was really difficult. But anyway, [Sister] Nancy Ryan and I were going to do it. Now I've taught at that school for five years, and the priest was only late for Mass once, and it's the day we chose to start. So, of course we have to have Mass, then we have to have breakfast, and we had to drive to school, so we have to all go together. It's foggy--not always foggy in Los Angeles--I'm at St. Bernard's near the ocean. So whether the students would all be out in the courtyard--they're all inside. And we arrive five minutes before school starts, we walked in, and some

kid yelled, "The nuns are in miniskirts!" And there was a riot in the school. I--as fast as I could got to my classroom. Kids are running in and out to look. The Principal gets on the microphone and tells everyone to go to their classrooms. What is going on? [laughs]. So, it was not a great experience. And then--so then of course, you talk to these kids--"Okay, that's enough now--do the test." Oh! [laughs]. It was not an easy transition. [all laugh].

[00:29:52.15] KELBY THWAITES: I'm sorry I just had to laugh just thinking--that is a great sound bite--"the nuns are in miniskirts!"

[00:30:00.01] SHANNON GREEN: Yes. And then there was a riot! [all laugh].

[00:30:01.26] KELBY THWAITES: I know, right. [all laugh].

[00:30:02.21] SHANNON GREEN: That's good. That's really good. [laughs]. So then when you go to Tucson, then the whole--has the community you're living with all transitioned out--

[00:30:16.05] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Yes. Well we all still wore veils, for--oh I can't remember when I stopped wearing a veil, but somewhere in that experience of time, yes.

[00:30:25.22] SHANNON GREEN: And how did your style of community change?

[00:30:28.24] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Well, we stopped having Superiors, so we had the local group deciding things. And we decided our schedule--we did many more things together. I mean, when I first entered, we didn't go out--we didn't do things. By the time I get to Tucson we were very involved with the farm worker movement and all kinds of things.

[00:31:04.24] SHANNON GREEN: So I want to go back to your parish ministry a little bit, so--this is again still kind of early after Vatican II, and having a Pastoral Associate. Did you have that title, or--?

[00:31:15.29] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: No. I think I had "Retreats and Spirituality" or something like that.

[00:31:23.07] SHANNON GREEN: Did you have a pastor who was amenable to having a Sister on the staff, or?

[00:31:29.01] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Yes.

[00:31:29.08] SHANNON GREEN: Could you talk a little bit about that?

[00:31:30.14] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Yes. Actually I had Bill [Dewan??], who later became President of the Paulist--the priests. So I worked in a Paulist parish. No, he wanted somebody to come and he wanted somebody to do that particular thing. And he wanted to create a team--we had three priests, and three laywomen--well two laywomen and a Sister, I guess--on the staff. And we met as a team, and decided on programs and things. And then we all did our thing. So--but I was very fortunate, because, yes, he did--he wanted somebody and he was very amenable to having a woman. So I didn't have the struggles some people had.

[00:32:17.05] SHANNON GREEN: What about in the parish community? How did the parish respond to the--to some of the things--some of the changes?

[00:32:23.29] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Well, I'd say, by and large most people were positive about it. There was some people who didn't like it, and there would be some people who wouldn't come to something I did because I wasn't a priest. But a whole lot of people did come. I mean, there was more than--I didn't feel like I had--that there weren't people that weren't supportive, and the fact that I was a woman--not a priest--didn't deter. It was whether or not what I did was something helpful for them.

[00:33:00.17] SHANNON GREEN: And can you share any stories about a liturgy experience that you led or

created, or just some kind of snapshot of what was exciting in that work at that time for you?

[00:33:15.23] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Well, this wouldn't be in the parish, but we did, in that convent, at some point--we had a priest who came--a Maryknoll, for something. And he said to us--we were complaining about you know, the language and the difficulties in the Church which still existed. And he said, "Well, so why don't you do something?" So we created a group which we called "Nourishment". We specifically asked women that we thought--they weren't all Sisters--who would be interested and once a month on a Friday we came together and I created the rituals. Just at the beginning, because I liked doing that and knew how to do it, and this was like something people weren't used to and didn't know how to do. And we did our own celebrations.

[00:34:21.14] SHANNON GREEN: You mentioned before that you developed these prayer books for Lent and seasonal--. Could you just share a little bit about how that came about?

[00:34:31.01] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: I saw a book that was done by some Sisters in the Midwest on ministry. And so I said to [Sister] Myrtle [Wyker??], who was our Sister who was sort of in charge of--I don't know what it was called then--Spiritual Development, or something. I said, "You know, this would be a really interesting project--I could get--we could get a Sister from--for each day of Lent to write a page, and then we could put it together". And she said, "That's a great idea--if you'll do it I'll pay for it"--because she had money in her budget. And so we did it for two or--I don't know how many years--three or four years. But anyway, so as I told you, I worked at a Paulist parish. The Paulists came to Tucson for their winter meeting, because Tucson's a much better place than the Northeast to have a winter meeting. And the President of the Paulist Press--I had some of those books out on a table in case somebody would be interested in them. He said--so he picked one up and he came to me the next day and he said--asked me some things about it, and he said, "Well, would you be interested in publishing it?" And I said, "Uh, well--". He said, "Can I give it to the President of Paulist Press and would you be willing to talk about it?" So I said, "All right". He said, "It would have to change somewhat", so I said, "Okay", thinking, you know, how people say things. Well, within a week the President of Paulist Press called me, wanted to know if we could do this book. But the deadline was like June 30th, and this was--and some various other things. But anyway, so I said, "Okay", and I got it together and did it. Now I mean, that's a very different story than--think of the people that for years try to get something published and can't. I didn't even think about doing it and doing it. And then I ultimately had to give it up because I got--I was elected to leadership in St. Louis [Missouri] and that was too much. But as you know, if you look at the literature today, those books are very popular now, and a whole lot of different ones are done. But--

[00:36:44.09] SHANNON GREEN: It's remarkable. I'm really glad to know that. [laughs].

[00:36:48.12] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: So it would be a much better story, you know, if I could tell you that for years I struggled to get this--I didn't. [all laugh].

[00:36:56.06] SHANNON GREEN: So you were in Tucson--so let's talk a little bit about the--sort of the latter part of those years in Tucson before leadership in St. Louis. So at this point, I do want to talk a little bit about community life and Clare [Sister Clare Dunn (-1981)] and Judy [Sister Judy Lovchik (1936-1981)] and how that all evolved--Clare's running for office, and what your experience of that--from your perspective, was--living in the community with them.

[00:37:26.02] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Okay. At--after I'd been there--I had not been there very long when Clare Dunn said to me--she was a high school Social Studies teacher, and we had been--taught together before at St. Mary's before--that she was considering about running for office. And I thought, "Oh my God, the community will not"--I mean we were open to some new things but this was going to be--whatever. It's going to be a real struggle. And she had--the more she taught Social Studies--one of the things that she did was she made the students go to a city council meeting or Pima County meeting or something to see how government really works, and who the people were. And to go to the Democratic Party meeting and to go to the Republican Party meeting and--doing things. And so, they were involved. And one time a student said to her, "Sister, it's really in a mess--why don't you run for office". And so I guess she really thought about it. And the Arizona State Legislature was really in a mess. They just--there were a lot of "good ol' boys" and they didn't do a whole lot. And the State had--there were a lot of poor people that were

not getting involved in things. So she really thought about it, and she knew--because she had also gone to all of these meetings--and actually had been chosen to be a McGovern delegate to the Convention--and the reason they chose her was because they knew they could trust her, that she wouldn't change her vote. So she went to that Convention, and that I think--all that happened there really made her begin to think about it. So Jack [Sarbor??] was head of the Democratic--she was a Democrat--was head of the Democratic Party in Tucson, and he was very supportive, and said, you know, he could get her some--in some places and you know, to at least to try out to see about the possibility of this. And then George Miller was--he became the mayor of Tucson--I'm not sure if he was at the very beginning. But anyway, he knew a lot about politics and so was very helpful in terms of moving things. So it was a real struggle. This was--the community was open to many people doing many things, but politics and et cetera was--so that took some time to work out. And no she was very clear, she wanted to be Sister Clare Dunn. She was not going to be--not hide the fact that she was. So after much struggle, she did get permission to do it. And we were in District 13, and you have to run in the District you live in. So we had lots of Jewish people. And she just had no idea how they'd feel about a nun running. But anyway--so the--several things. One was, we didn't have any money. And in politics, what a lot of politicians do, even back in those days, is well you just spend it and then if you don't--if the money doesn't come in in contributions you reimburse yourself. Well, we weren't going to reimburse ourselves. I mean, there was just no way that was going to happen. So--and I was the Treasurer. [laughs]. So that was the first thing. And she didn't--she only--she wouldn't take a donation for more than one hundred dollars. So we had to raise money. And we got lots of people who contributed for the first time in their life, and they sent us twenty-five dollars. And we had nuns who sent us ten dollars. And one day we came and there was a letter from a woman at the University who was a professor and she was--she'd had a bad day--but she was so encouraged by Clare doing this she sent us a hundred dollars. You'd have thought she sent ten million. But so--and I always knew that if it got really desperate I could write to twenty nuns and say, "You've got to send us twenty dollars". But I mean, it wasn't going to be a lot of money, but--

[00:42:13.00] SHANNON GREEN: So it sounds like you just jumped on board--

[00:42:19.04] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Right--

[00:42:20.16] SHANNON GREEN: --this was like a community effort.

[00:42:21.24] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Oh absolutely. Several Sisters came during the summer, because they were teachers and they had the time off, and we walked the district, and knocked on doors, said who she was, and did it. And yes, lots of people--several Sisters came for two or three weeks at a time and did that, and the Sisters at St. Mary's handwrote all the flyers that had to be sent out. And lots of different people in the community--somebody whose uncle made signs and--so there were a lot of people. And it was interesting. The issues were--well one was the ERA [Equal Rights Amendment (1972)], which of course never passed but Equal Rights Amendment. There were a number of women that were really interested in that. But the elderly were really concerned about their healthcare. It sounds like today. Education was a huge issue, and especially people who had children with special needs. And the sanctuary movement--immigration at that particular time wasn't--I mean, the issues were somewhat the same. And the poor. So as we walked, one of the things we discovered--there were some people who were not going to vote for nuns, and some of those people were Catholics who did not think nuns should be in politics. And there were some other people. But for the most part that was not the issue for people. They wanted to know where she stood on the issues. And if--these were there concerns, and so, if you would do that. Then when we got close to the election time, four or five Sisters came and they had the list of all the people that registered in the district and the idea was that you were to call them. George Miller had said afterwards, "Give me five nuns I can get anybody elected". He could not believe it. So these Sisters took and they called everybody. And we're like, "Well yeah, that's what they were told to do". And he said, "Oh no--people forget to do it". And when the people called and so they brought back their list--"This woman needs a ride to the polling place"--they solved several problems for people. I mean, he was--he could not believe it. But we honestly did not know--oh and the newspaper. The newspaper interviewed her--they really wanted to support her. But they asked her about pornography--I can't remember--but they thought maybe she was a moral crusader. So, I think she finally said to them, "You know, these really aren't my issues". But the papers did support her. But we did not know the first time, until election night, whether or not she was going to get elected. I mean it--we thought--I mean, we'd really done our best--but we didn't know. Now when she died, she had the most name recognition of any politician in the state, including the governor--because--

[gets emotional]--oh I'm sorry--

[00:45:42.11] SHANNON GREEN: It's okay. You want to take a break?

[00:45:51.25] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: No. After all these years--just because she had done so much for so many people.

[00:46:02.15] [Director's comments].

[00:46:45.00] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: So, as you know, several years later they were killed in an automobile accident. The drunk drivers were on the wrong side of the road and they killed them--they were killed instantly--both Clare and Judy. Didn't talk a lot about Judy, but--[Sister] Judy Lovchik came then and--when she got elected--and worked with her. So they bounced off ideas. But Judy was really excellent at writing. So Clare got the ideas but Judy wrote them. And one of the things is--you may know about politicians--is when they start out, they tell a joke, and that's a really good way to go. We practiced with Clare several times, and we finally said, "Clare, you can't do jokes". [laughs]. But she was very good on the issues, and on--at being asked questions. And although in the legislature--well first of all they couldn't believe a nun was there, and--but the Catholics were--what would I say--polite to her, because you couldn't--I mean they were raised to be polite to nuns. So--and they thought she--they didn't support her ideas. But she spoke them out, you know--so it got put into the record and called them on several issues. But the thing that she did that I think gave her the name recognition and that is, she taught--she was the teacher. She taught people how to go to the legislature and lobby people. Or who were the people in the legislature they needed to talk to in order to get what they needed. And then Judy did a lot of that too, helping--like especially I remember, the parents of special needs students. So she helped them to see this was the department they needed to go to--this was the person they needed to insist upon seeing--this was what they needed to say. So she did a lot of that.

[00:49:06.10] SHANNON GREEN: Whenever--when I hear you talking about her and their work, I just think about the way the charism is starting to be articulated more so at that time. It seems like this is how they respond.

[00:49:18.07] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Right. Yes.

[00:49:19.23] SHANNON GREEN: Could you reflect on that a little bit for us, using some of the words of the charism and the mission and--?

[00:49:27.11] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Well, one was that we believed that--we found "all of which women is capable" as really a part of who we are. And I think besides herself and what she did, in terms of what women were capable of doing, that she tried to encourage other women to be able to do this thing. And just being a role model and seeing how that was I think made a big difference. We--the charism as we came to know it more was that--being "all-inclusive love", that all people be included in things. She did a lot of ecumenical things. She was very clear that you didn't have to have money to come to her office and talk to her. She went--any group that invited her she went to talk to them, to help them, to be with them. And working together with other groups--they did do that. One of the things I--and Judy really could write well--I brought a couple of things that--is--happens all the time. I don't say sentences, I'm sorry.

[00:50:53.23] SHANNON GREEN: You're doing just fine.

[00:50:56.01] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: This is from one of her talks at the end. She said--it's still very valuable today. "We will need courage. We will need energy. We will need vision. We will need to be at ease with ourselves and our decisions. Above all, like the psalmist, we will need to keep our eyes fixed on the Lord our God, until God lets us rest. And then we will know, as we have always known, that the effort was worth the gift of our lives, the best of our years, the length of our days." They did it for a talk. I mean, she had no idea. And then the ecumenical idea in there--Clare did something with an ecumenical group in Tucson, and this was the blessing that she gave at the end, which we used a whole lot. I'm hoping I don't have to put my glasses on to read this. "May you continue to be a remarkable sign--". I'll do better [put's glasses on]. "--of the living God. Fearlessly contend against evil. Make no peace with oppression. Strive to be

a shining witness of reconciliation and friendship. Reach across boundaries and barriers to form community with all people of good will. And may God who has loved you without measure, and without regret, fill you with the blessings of Jesus Christ, the refreshment of the Spirit, and the joyful unity of the Triune God. Amen." See, to move across boundaries and barriers, she said, to form community with all people of good will. Those were some of the words that she used about--

[00:53:24.27] [Director's comments] [repeating first sentence of blessing with glasses on]

[00:53:51.22] SHANNON GREEN: How did their ministry impact you and your spirituality, or conviction?

[00:54:01.08] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Well, I really felt I was a part of what they are doing, and I felt it was a very important work, although I would never go to the legislature--that was not my gift. But I could be helpful in terms of what I did, and it takes many people to get people elected. And it broadened my perspective. I mean, I learned--I did not realize there were so many elderly people--and these are not poor--who were really concerned about their future. And at that time, Medicaid was beginning and wasn't as established as it is now. Now you just assume you're going to get all of these benefits and that. And then the plight of women. So I came in contact with more need than I had before, and so broadened--and I also met many people who were really working hard to do something about that. So it was both--seeing more need but also being more aware of people that needed to--needed help--and people who were really working--gave their lives to trying to get something better for people. And I think I came more to value that "being a part of". You didn't have to be the person that was doing this--but being a part of and supportive of and going to meetings sometimes. You know, that there were people there that did care--it made a big difference.

[00:56:02.27] SHANNON GREEN: One--I think I read in--maybe it's in Sister Mary's [??] book that there were times when it sounds like it was kind of lonely for them in the Legislature.

[00:56:14.15] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Yes, I think that's really true. Because there weren't a lot of people who really were supportive of them, and our Legislature is not really educated. That's true even today. A lot of them only have high school educations. And they were very entrenched with the way things were. And of course, in order to get elected, as I said, in those places, you do have to have money. So the mines have money, so they would pay you--and the mines want certain things. It's escaping me now but there are other groups that have money and so then it's a really hard system.

[00:57:13.19] SHANNON GREEN: She ran a second time, and--

[00:57:16.09] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: --and she ran a third time. Now the second time we were not nearly as nervous. And the third time it was like, she was a shoe-in. She was considering, the next time, running for the Senate. But she hadn't announced that to anybody, but I knew that was what she was considering, because it was smaller and she might be able to do better--do more things there. And there were a few more people there that were more--trying to move some issues forward. But it didn't happen.

[00:57:50.11] SHANNON GREEN: How did their death impact you and your community?

[00:57:54.10] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Oh. Well it was such a terrible shock. I was coming back from a workshop, so I wasn't there. And I kept saying to everybody, "They can't have been--no it's a divided highway--they can't have been killed in a head on crash--it's a divided highway". I just--I was sure they were wrong. So then I had to get back to Tucson. But then I wanted to bury them in our church, and people kept saying to me, "No, it's not big enough". So it had to be at the cathedral. But--I mean, I shouldn't say that--you know and then to take--their families coming, and--. All kinds of people came--the church was full. And some Sisters had been really good friends of theirs were on their way back to Los Angeles, and just--they were in the car ready to leave Chicago and the phone kept ringing and kept ringing and the woman said--who they had stayed with that night--"I'd better go answer it". And that was them telling them they needed to come to Tucson. And all the legislative people came down. And I did have a thing with the press. I said, "Now, the--". They wanted to video--the news people wanted to video it. And I said, "No!" Because I have this thing of somebody's going to stick a microphone in front of Mrs. Dunn or Mrs. Lovchik and say, "How do you feel?" That annoys me to no end. So I said, "No!". So Larry [Schnebly??], who was a parishioner of ours

and a good friend and he worked for Channel 9--he calls me up and he says, "Sister, you know it's a really important event, and we really need to do it." And I said, "Well, I don't want someone sticking their microphone in front of them!" And he said, "If I coordinate it, we'll just put one microphone--one station in and then they'll send the feed out to everybody else, and they will not--". I said, "They cannot walk up and"--people going up and down the altar, it just annoys me to no end. I mean, it's not their fault--they don't get it. But anyway, "And no you cannot interview the mothers!" So he said, "Fine". So I said, "Fine". And honestly, I hardly knew they were there. But the thing I feel badly about--and actually it turned out wonderful, because they videoed the whole thing. So we were going to have Assembly the next week. And so every Sister got to see it. But when we have a tradition, when the Provincial goes up at the end to the casket, and she took the mothers, and they turned the--because they'd gotten this message, "Don't disturb the mothers". So they didn't get to see that. But anyway, so--.

[01:01:02.03] SHANNON GREEN: What year was this?

[01:01:04.05] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: '81. July 31st, 1981.

[01:01:09.28] SHANNON GREEN: So you stayed in Tucson a few more years?

[01:01:13.23] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Yes. And then--I did. And worked at the parish. And then I got elected to our congregational leadership, and so I was eight years in St. Louis [Missouri]. And that was a wonderful experience, because I got to go to St. Paul [Minnesota], St. Louis, Albany [New York] and the South, and I got to go to Peru and Japan and Chile and Hawaii--all of the places where we had missions--and see the community. And got to--like when the LCWR [Leadership Conference of Women Religious] meetings happened. So there were a lot of wonderful things that were happening and a lot of leaders and a lot of people I saw.

[01:01:55.23] SHANNON GREEN: So you're one of the Sisters then that has more connections across the congregation?

[01:02:00.12] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Yes, I do. Yes I do know lots of people across the congregation, yes.

[01:02:05.25] SHANNON GREEN: And has that been an enriching--

[01:02:08.13] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Yes. And I've been to all the mother houses and yes, I know a lot of people. In fact, we just had Assembly, and [Sister] Chris Partisano from Albany came to facilitate it. And so we connected again. We haven't seen one another in twenty years. But I did know her.

[01:02:25.13] SHANNON GREEN: Was it a difficult transition into leadership, or was it something you took on willingly, or--[laughs]--?

[01:02:33.11] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: I was very surprised that Sister Rose Cecilia [Harrington (1919-2003)], who had had the job before, asked me if I would consider doing it. And I said oh, I'd have to think about it. But I really was sort of surprised, and I did not think I would be selected, because I had not been really active in that a whole lot. But one of the issues at that meeting was about the women's issues. And I--when I came to Tucson--I went to an ecumenical class--Donna [Scopper??] did it and we read Mary' Daly's book "Beyond God the Father" (1973). That was another eye-opening experience for me. So I'm very interested in women in the Church. And I had done workshops on it for our Sisters and for other people, and I had even done one for the congregation--they asked me--mostly because there weren't any people that were into this issue. So that was an issue that the chapter was very interested in, and people said I was somebody that had a lot of experience in that. So I was selected.

[01:03:43.04] SHANNON GREEN: You know we talk a lot about leadership for the young women at the Mount. Is there anything you want to say to them, or about women's leadership, or how women lead, or any way that--we talk about, you know, the "unstoppable" nature of the Sisters inspiring us. Is there any reflections on women and leadership that you'd like to share with them?

[01:04:07.11] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Well I think leadership is a really important ability to have. And I think a lot of people have it and I think there are lots of ways in which one can use your leadership ability. So I don't necessarily think you have to be a CEO of a company. However I--also, if you can be a CEO of a company, go for it. And I think women do have some values about relationships and inclusivity and--that they're willing to spend more energy on than maybe traditionally has been done. That is really important. And I think that they sometimes have different perspectives on something and I think it's really important. And so I really think--I think it's something you need to think about, in terms of--that you know, where could I give leadership here. It doesn't just happen. So--and maybe on a project--where's the place my gifts and skills could be used?

[01:05:30.23] SHANNON GREEN: So a discernment--

[01:05:33.09] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Yes. And there are lots of different ways to do it. But it certainly isn't a skill that just belongs to men.

[01:05:45.04] SHANNON GREEN: Are there any Sisters that were good leadership models for you over the years, either way back or currently, or--?

[01:05:54.22] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: [Sister] Mary Brigid [Fitzpatrick] would be one. As you know, what--she was the Provincial when Clare wanted to run, and the community was really divided on whether she should or shouldn't. And Mary Brigid really listened to what Clare had to say. And she made the decision knowing that not everybody would agree. That's a hard thing to do. And it's really hard for Sisters of St. Joseph, because see, we like unity and reconciliation--we like harmony, and we like to all be together. But we also don't want to give up our ideas. [laughs]. So, the two things don't go together. But that she listened, because she said to Clare after a meeting, "I need to talk to you". Because she heard what she said. And I--that has always impressed me. And the other is [Sister] Mary Kevin Ford, who was our General Superior for the years after Vatican Council, when we were redoing constitutions and you had to go to Rome and those kinds of things. And she was a very straightforward person and very detailed oriented and she probably would have been a great general had she been a man. So it's the end of her term, and it's that we're going to have another group in office. And so she liked--she sent things out and there's "A", "1", "2", "3", "B", "1", "2", "3"--I mean she--that was her style. But she did lots of very good things and got us through very hard times. Well, this time we're going to send out just a picture of the homecoming of two Sisters--this is very different than we've ever done before. So I walk into--we're going to vote the last day. And I walk in and she's sitting there. And in those days we weren't even in round tables--we're in a square. And I thought, "Oh my God, this must be so difficult for her because this is so different than her style or how we do things." So I went and sat next to her, and I said, "This must be very difficult for you". And she said to me, which I've always remembered, "This is what the community has chosen to do, and I'm going to vote for it." And I think that takes real greatness.

[01:08:42.24] SHANNON GREEN: Thank you for sharing that. Oh, so you went back to Tucson, and then back to leadership.

[01:08:53.23] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Right. And then back to Tucson--

[01:08:56.03] SHANNON GREEN: [laughs]. And then back to Tucson--

[01:08:57.02] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Right. Worked in a parish for another twenty years.

[01:08:59.19] SHANNON GREEN: Yes. Was it the same--did you go back to the same--different parish?

[01:09:00.17] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: No. Different parish.

[01:09:04.00] SHANNON GREEN: How was it for you to transition in and out of those kinds of ministries?

[01:09:08.13] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Well, the last one I had a little bit of time. It just takes time--but I'd learned that--it just takes time to learn the new--. And I had a very--an excellent pastor also, my last time, too, who had--he was a diocesan priest. But he had worked for RENEW [RENEW International, parish

ministry organization] for several years--the national office. And he was very supportive of what I did. And he--if people would go to him and complain he'd say, "You have to go talk to Sister", or "You've got to go ask Sister". He never--made decisions for me. And we worked really well together. And actually the parishioners really came to be very accepting of me.

[01:10:13.14] SHANNON GREEN: Yeah, you've really spanned the time in parish ministry since Vatican II. Now it's--the laity are very used to having pastoral associates or--

[01:10:20.14] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Right, yes.

[01:10:22.21] SHANNON GREEN: Do have any just reflections or encouragement or not for people considering lay ministry and parish life? Or any wisdom to share? Especially women?

[01:10:36.04] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Yes. It is the time for the laity. It is the time for their insights and their experiences to inform how we do formation and how we do liturgy and how we do things. And it's different than priests and religious. But it's time for that now. And I encourage people to do it. It's hard, because it's still ground-breaking. But I'd also encourage you--if--go somewhere you know there's a possibility you could do it. There are some people in leadership in the Church--and they aren't all old--who are very rigid. No, you know, it says in the Gospel, "Shake the dust from your feet". So be careful about where you go.

[01:11:34.14] SHANNON GREEN: You seem pretty comfortable saying it's the time for the laity.

[01:11:38.07] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Oh yes. Oh, it is for sure.

[01:11:42.23] SHANNON GREEN: It almost seems to make you happy in some way.

[01:11:44.21] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Right.

[01:11:46.22] SHANNON GREEN: On that note, and I'm skipping around a little bit now so forgive me.

[01:11:51.12] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Okay.

[01:11:52.03] SHANNON GREEN: In terms of the future of the charism, or the future of religious life, how do you feel about that? Do you have anxieties or hopes from where you are now?

[01:12:02.03] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: I think it will continue, but it will be very small like it was before. See, I came in the time when there were fifties and sixties of us, and we thought that would go on forever, and it didn't. But I think it will continue. There--religious have always met the unmet needs of the times. And when I entered it was nursing and healthcare, and really what American Sisters did in this country was extraordinary in those areas. And now there are other needs, and there are some things that--like [Sister] Marilyn Rudy [(1933-2010)] and [Sister] Louise Bernstein who--in a store front--started what is now St. Joseph Center. And there's still those needs for those things to happen, and a whole lot in terms of with our immigrant communities and that. So, there will be people, yes, that will do that.

[01:13:15.15] SHANNON GREEN: Do you see the charism living on in other ways as well?

[01:13:19.29] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Oh, right now in our country?

[01:13:21.14] SHANNON GREEN: Yes. [laughs].

[01:13:22.28] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: You know, where--that we can be inclusive, that we can be respectful, that we can try to build bridges, not tear down--that we be aware of those that are most vulnerable. Oh, yes there--we're desperate for that charism. [laughs].

[01:13:55.08] KELBY THWAITS: Can I interject here?

[01:13:57.01] SHANNON GREEN: Please.

[01:13:57.15] KELBY THWAITES: Since we're on this topic. Could you--so for those viewers who are--have no idea, let's say, about anything about Catholicism, okay--could you describe for the audience who are the "laity", what that means, and what you see as their function in the future--because really, being in a transitionary time, you know right now. So if--but deliver all of that to Shannon. [all laugh].

[01:14:30.04] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Right.

[01:14:31.23] [Director's comments].

[01:15:14.20] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: I think we've come to the time--I think we've always thought of the Church as the hierarchy, which really are priests--really Sisters, although we do all the work, are not the--not in the hierarchy. But priests and Sisters--you know, people who dedicate--that's their main focus in life. And really, Vatican Council said we are the "people of God", and the "people of God" are all of the baptized people in the Church whose main focus in life is their families and whatever their certain profession is. But they also have this call--they are part of the Church and part of their mission is in some way to help build up the body of Christ. And so more and more of them are involved, being on parish councils, or--and they're doing functions within the Church, like electors and Eucharistic ministers. But also doing teaching and being on committees. We have a very strong social justice group in our parish who presents twice a month, educational things and speakers, and also supports homeless shelters for men. And I live in Tucson so we have a lot of immigration issues.

[01:16:46.03] [Director's comments].

[01:16:55.07] SHANNON GREEN: So I want to ask you--before I ask you a couple last questions--was there anything else--I want you to have the last word. Or share something that perhaps we didn't get to. I do have a couple quick more questions about Judy and Clare. But I also want to see if there's something from your reflections as you thought about today, that you haven't had a chance to share yet.

[01:17:14.18] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: No, I think. I mean, I could go on forever, but no I think I said--

[01:17:21.08] SHANNON GREEN: Okay. And how God worked in your life. You said you wanted to make sure--you wanted to--

[01:17:25.04] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Oh.

[01:17:25.22] SHANNON GREEN: Was there a story there, or--?

[01:17:28.26] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: When I said about the book, the Paulist Press taking the books, and also what happened to me being elected in leadership--because I had done the work for--in the women's issues--I think that's been--and being asked to go to USF--I think that's my experience of how God worked. That God surprised me many times in how my life went. I am not one that thought, "Oh, this is what I'm going to do all my life". But I'm very glad that it went the way it did, and that I've done the things I've done, and who knows what else I'll do?

[01:18:13.27] SHANNON GREEN: Can you just say in a few sentences, maybe a more general background about Sister Clare and Sister Judy, if you know where they were from, that kind of thing, their families--?

[01:18:27.24] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Okay. Judy Lovchik was born in South Dakota, and I can tell you that she was born on May 30, 1936 because I was also. We share a birthday, including year. And then I'm not sure they got to California. And she entered the community after high school, and went into teaching, and then became a Principal, and ultimately came to work for Clare and Judy. She had been the Principal of a school that closed in Tucson right before she came to work for us. Clare on the other hand was born in Riverside, California. And her mother was a Catholic. Her father was not. She did not ever go to Catholic school. And she just felt that this was what she wanted to do, and she went to talk to a priest in Riverside. And he knew a Sister--she didn't know a community of Sisters--he knew a Sisters--or he knew about the

Sisters on Slauson in Los Angeles and so he told her to go there and talk to someone. So she did, and she entered the community. And it was a real struggle for her, because most of the people that entered were--had known the Sisters for a long time, and had gone either to St. Mary's [Academy] or OLP [Our Lady of Peace] or Star of the Sea--one of our high schools. And she didn't know any of this. She didn't know any religion. I mean, she went to church, but she hadn't had any religion and so that part was catching up on all these things. And she will say once, in terms of politics, she was talking about something and [Sister] Kathleen Kelly said to her, "You need to read the social teachings of the Church". And she said, "Well, what's that?" So--and that was what really began to get Clare involved in things.

[01:20:33.15] SHANNON GREEN: What do you miss about them?

[01:20:35.26] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: Oh. I mean, I loved living with--Clare Dunn was--when she was really frustrated or when she had to work really hard--she worked really hard--then she came out and cleaned the kitchen and cooked this absolutely delicious meal. And she loved to go--we used to go on picnics up to Mount Lemon or we would, for a few hours, drive around southern Arizona--I miss that. I miss sharing prayer with them. I miss struggling with issues, or how we might say this, or what should she do. I mean, we worked a lot with her when she was going to go to the newspaper what--okay if they ask you this what will you do--or when she was going to places where things were going to be hostile, you know--here are the issues--here are the three points. We listened to her talks and said things to her. Just everything.

[01:21:42.20] SHANNON GREEN: Is there anything else you want us to know about them? Either of them, or both of them?

[01:21:48.12] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: They were both ordinary and extraordinary people.

[01:21:56.17] SHANNON GREEN: Thank you. Anything else?

[01:22:03.27] SISTER BARBARA SULLIVAN: No, I think--

[01:22:07.01] [Director's comments]

[01:22:30.14] End of interview.

Interview Index

Interview Date: 10/23/2017

Interviewee: Sister Barbara Sullivan

Interviewer: Shannon Green, Director, CSJ Institute, Mount Saint Mary's University; Sean Gary, Kelby Thwaites, Instructor, Film and Television, Mount Saint Mary's University.

Location: Carondelet Center, Los Angeles, California.

Transcription Date: 12/11/2017

Transcribed By: Nancy Steinmann

[00:00:00.00] [Director's comments]

[00:00:21.29] Date, location participants.

[00:00:35.24] Full name and age: Sister Barbara Mary Sullivan, age 81.

[00:00:51.22] Early life and family. Born Salt Lake City, Utah. Father railroad worker. Mother from Idaho, nurse. Two younger brothers, deceased; one younger sister who also attended and taught at Mount. Being a Catholic in Utah.

[00:01:57.03] Early religious life. Mother Catholic convert. Attending Methodist church with grandmother.

[00:03:02.29] Early memories of Sisters. Early school with Holy Cross Sisters. Early vocation. Father's attitude about attending college.

[00:04:24.18] Meeting CSJs at Mount. Choosing to attend Mount.

[00:05:44.27] Coming to Mount for the first time. Mistaking postulants for students.

[00:06:55.05] Attending MSMC. English major, history minor. Sister Faculty. Sister Mary Patricia [Sexton (1912-1986)]. Sister Laurentia [Digges (1910-1991)]. Sister St. Francis [Sheerin], history faculty.

[00:07:21.09] Entering religious life. Sister Laurentia [Digges]. Sister Mary Patricia [Sexton]. Sisters encouraging young women to enter religious life. Prayer life and spiritual life.

[00:08:46.03] Attraction to CSJs. Story about serving at Christmas dinner: Mother Rosemary [Lyons (1893-1971)], MSMC President, serving other Sisters.

[00:10:04.03] Family reaction to vocation.

[00:11:22.22] Postulant and novice life. Adjusting to daily routine. Rule of silence. Bel Air Fire [1961]. Eating lunch before evacuation. Sisters losing clothing, etc. Moving residences to Daniel Freeman Hospital and Doheny campus. Sewing the habit.

[00:14:40.27] Reception. Receiving the habit. Religious name: Sister Kenneth Ann Sullivan. Kenneth father's name, Ann sister's name.

[00:15:40.13] Early experience of charism. Unity and reconciliation, service. Learning history of CSJs. Thinking priest founded order rather than Sisters.

[00:17:07.28] Early missions. Teaching high school. Story about trying to teach first grade. Working at St. Mary's Academy. Early civil rights movement. "Red tie" girls. Teaching at St. Bernard's and Bishop Montgomery school.

[00:19:46.08] Vatican II. Earning masters in Theology from University of San Francisco. Exposure to new theological ideas. Barnabas Ahern [Rev. Barnabas Mary Ahern, CP (1916-1995), American Catholic theologian and Biblical scholar]. Struggles with Vatican II changes.

[00:22:50.02] Vatican II ideas. Concept of "the people of God". Scripture for personal prayer--personal insight into God. Changes to spiritual life. Creating prayer rituals and leading retreats for other Sisters. Not choosing to earn PhD.

[00:25:24.15] Transition to parish work. Moving from LA to Tucson, Arizona. Sister Clare Dunn (-1981). Sister Rachel Fitzgerald. Teaching at Salpointe school. Attractions of parish work. Tension between old and new ideas about scripture and ritual.

[00:27:22.16] Changing the habit in 1968. Story about changing habit in break for semester test at school: "The nuns are in miniskirts!" and "starting a riot". Sister Nancy Ryan. Keeping the veil.

[00:30:25.16] Changes in community life after Vatican II. Not having Superiors. Arranging own schedule. Social justice work with farm workers movement.

[00:31:04.13] Parish ministry. Pastoral associates. Pastor's support of Sister and laywomen on staff. Father Bill [Dewan??, later President of Paulist priests]. Reaction of parish community to Vatican II changes and a woman parish associate. Starting women's liturgy group "Nourishment" to create or adjust rituals.

[00:34:20.24] Developing prayer books for seasonal celebrations (Lent, etc.). Sister Myrtle [Wyker??]. Publishing book with Paulist Press. Election to leadership in St. Louis.

[00:36:55.14] Ministry in Tucson. Sister Clare [Dunn (-1981)]. Sister Judy [Lovchik (1936-1981)]. Sister Clare, high school social studies teacher, running for political office in Arizona State Legislature District 13. Jack [Sarbor??], head of Democratic Party in Tucson. George Miller [mayor of Tucson]. Raising funds for campaign. CSJ support for campaign. Issues: Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), elderly health care, education especially special needs children, immigration, poor. Telephone campaign. Death of Sister Clare and Sister Judy in automobile accident [1981].

[00:47:00.20] Sister Judy Lovchik (1936-1981). Assistant to Sister Clare, writer. Practicing jokes. Reaction of legislature and Catholics to nun's election. Sister Clare and Sister Judy educating citizens how to interact with government.

[00:49:05.25] Sister Clare and charism. "All of which women is capable". Encouraging other women, being role model. All-inclusive love. Quote from talk by Sister Clare written by Sister Judy. Ecumenical approach. Quote of blessing from Sister Clare: "moving across barriers".

[00:53:52.21] Impact of Sister Clare's ministry on Sister Barbara. Learning of new needs: concerns of elderly re: medical care, plight of women. Valuing working as a team. Sense of loneliness in Legislature. Level of education of legislators. Influence of special interest groups. Sister Clare's second term.

[00:57:49.20] Deaths of Sister Clare and Sister Judy. Public reaction. Larry [Schnebly??], parishioner. Arranging funeral.

[01:01:09.10] Working in congregational leadership in St. Louis. Traveling to missions. Working with others in congregation. Sister Christine Partisano, Albany. Sister Rose Cecilia [Harrington (1919-2003)]. Book "Beyond God the Father" by Mary Daly (1973). Creating workshops on issues of women in the Church.

[01:03:43.12] Reflections on leadership for students at MSMU. Ways to use leadership ability. Women's attitudes on relationships and inclusivity.

[01:05:44.22] Memories of Sisters as role models. Sister Mary Brigid Fitzpatrick, CSJ Provincial--ability to listen. Sister Mary Kevin Ford, CSJ Provincial after Vatican II. Story about Sister Mary Kevin supporting community's wishes.

[01:08:44.16] Returning to Tucson several times for more parish work. Adjusting to new parish. Reflections and wisdom for those considering lay ministry. "Time for the laity": leadership from laity instead of hierarchy.

[01:11:46.22] Future of charism and religious life. Meeting the needs of the times. Sister Marilyn Rudy (1933-2010) and Sister Louise Bernstein starting St. Joseph's Center. Need for charism in current time: inclusivity, respect, building bridges, helping the vulnerable.

[01:13:55.07] [Director's comments]

[01:15:15.01] Description of laity and their function in the future of Church. Definition of "People of God". Social justice work.

[01:16:51.04] Other reflections. How God worked in her life.

[01:18:14.18] Personal background of Sister Clare Dunn and Sister Judy Lovchik. Living and working with Sister Clare and Sister Judy.

[01:22:01.04] [Director's comments].

[01:22:30.26] End of interview.